**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 13, 2017**

**Town Hall – BOS Meeting Room**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Megan Sommer (Chairperson), Michelle Murphy (Vice-Chairperson), Athena Brodsky (Treasurer), and Jeffrey Dougan (Secretary).

**MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY:** John McLaughlin

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Linda Fulton

**GUEST(s):** None

1. **Call to Order.**

* Chairperson Megan Sommer called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM at the Town Hall BOS Meeting Room.

2. **Public Comment**.

* Since no public was present, this agenda item closed early.
* Mr. McLaughlin raised the topic of extending the comment section to longer than 2 minutes per person. Mr. Dougan stated that since this is a new policy and since, generally, we do not have a lot of public comment, this policy should be tested to see if the need to change is evident. Ms. Sommer stated that Mr. McLaughlin's comments will be taken under advisement.
* Mr. Dougan also stated that since the policy takes a lot of agenda real estate, next month the policy should appear as a footnote.

3. **Old Business**.

A. Review of COD Procedures and Goals.

i. Discussion of COD Role/Responsibilities within Local Government.

* Mr. Dougan suggested that this section be tabled until all COD members were present to discuss.
* ***Motion by Mr. McLaughlin to table agenda item 3ai until next month. Seconded by Ms. Murphy.***
* During discussion, prior to vote, Ms. Brodsky raised a concern that we need to discuss this section as it relates directly to our agenda item related to the 2019 Budget. The COD mission statement appears on the budget request. Ms. Sommer asked Mr. McLaughlin if he wanted to withdraw the motion in light of this. Mr. McLaughlin called the vote.
* ***Motion Failed 1 to 4. In Favor - Mr. McLaughlin. Against - Ms. Sommer, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Brodsky and Mr. Dougan.***
* Mr. Dougan presented sample mission statements from other COD’s for review. Mr. Dougan read samples from Boston, Cambridge, Haverhill and Sandwich. After reading the Haverhill mission statement, the COD favored using theirs as a model.
* Wordsmithing ensued to personalize it for Scituate and the ability of the membership and the role in which the membership felt the COD can operate. Mr. McLaughlin wanted stronger language while a majority of the membership wanted less “enforcement/authoritative” language in favor of “assistance/informative” language.
* Final language proposed:

“We are a Commission, all appointed by the Board of Selectmen, who volunteer our time and skills to serve the Town of Scituate and the needs of Individuals with Disabilities.   
  
We provide information, resources and referrals regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as other federal and state regulations related to Individuals with Disabilities. We provide information and referral in critical areas such as:  
Housing,  
Employment,  
Education,  
Transportation,  
Voting,  
Communication,  
Health Services,  
Public Accommodations, and  
Access to programs, services and facilities that are available.”

This was read 3 times, 1 prior to vote, and 2 times at the request of Mr. McLaughlin.

* ***Motion by Ms. Brodsky to accept the changes. Seconded by Mr. Dougan. Motion passed 4-1. In Favor - Ms. Sommer, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Brodsky, and Mr. Dougan. Against - Mr. McLaughlin.***

Agenda items 3ii - 3vii.

* Members wanted to wait for all COD members to be present before proceeding further with these items.
* ***Motion by Mr. Dougan to table these items until next month. Seconded by Ms. Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.***

B. Scituate Beach Access - Minot Beach.

* Ms. Sommer asked Ms. Murphy if there was an update to a request that she had received. Ms. Murphy explained that she had sent something to the COD regarding the request, but agreed to resend the details of the question after clarifying the questions with the requestor.
* Mr. McLaughlin stated that he has done some fact finding visits regarding the access at Minot Beach already.
* No vote was needed at this time.

C. Acceptance of Past Minutes.

* ***Motion by Ms. Brodsky to accept the minutes. Seconded by Mr. Dougan.***
* During discussion, Mr. McLaughlin, again, raised a concern that the current Agenda does not look like or contain the items from the former agendas and would like those former items to be on the current agendas. Ms. Sommer explained, for the 3rd month in a row, that the former agenda items are going to be addressed under the current agenda item 3E(iv). Item 3E(iv) will address old agenda items to see if they are still active and/or need to remain as active items for the COD. Mr. Dougan also discussed that agendas need to reflect only what is planned to be discussed at the meeting, not items that are still open and/or not intended to be discussed.
* ***Motion passed 4-1. In Favor - Ms. Sommer, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Brodsky and Mr. Dougan. Against - Mr. McLaughlin.***

3. **New Business.**

A. Treasurer’s Report.

* Ms. Brodsky explained that the remaining COD General Fund budget for FY18 is $4600 after expenditures for the awareness event. The COD Expendable Trust Fund budget for FY18 has a remaining balance of $4807.
* Mr. McLaughlin questioned taxpayer monies being used for the Disability Awareness Event, specifically, there were state agencies, local agencies and nonprofits present at the event and did they get compensated for their time. He explained that he was approached by people asking him about this. Ms. Sommer, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Brodsky and Mr. Dougan all mentioned that the COD did not expend funds to pay people to attend the event. The only expenditures were for supplies and the required police detail. As for the vendor’s reimbursements, it is advised that the concerned citizens reach out to the respective authorities regarding compensation. The COD is not responsible for that.
* Mr. McLaughlin, at this point in the meeting, stated that the COD meeting has gone beyond the timeframe listed on the agenda. Ms. Sommer stated that the ending timeframe on the agenda is not meant as a hard end time, like the start time.
* ***Motion by Mr. McLaughlin to adjourn the meeting after discussion of agenda item 4B. No Second. Ms. Sommer called for a Second to the Motion. No Second. Motion Falls to the Floor.***

B. 2019 Budget.

* Ms. Brodsky stated that the 2019 Budget needs to be submitted tomorrow (12/14).
* Mr. Dougan stated that he will update the COD mission statement and send it to the COD. Ms. Brodsky will update the budget request with the agreed upon language.
* Major Budget Components section of the 2019 Budget Request were discussed. Mr. McLaughlin wants a reserve. He also stated that the 4 items listed strictly earmark amounts and makes it difficult to change. Ms. Sommer explained that there is a process for moving monies if needed and it isn’t too difficult to do so following the process.
* Ms. Sommer suggested lowering the “Fund Accessible Features” section from $1500 to $1000 as the Expendable Trust monies could also be used for this.
* Mr. McLaughlin suggested raising the “Provide reasonable training” section from $500 to $1000. Ms. Murphy agreed and supported the suggestion as there are currently 6 members COD who may be able to use this.
* Mr. McLaughlin questioned why the “Host a forum” section is set at $1000 when only about $600 was spent this year. Mr. Dougan stated that, since the event was so successful, it is anticipated it may grow and the COD should not limit the cost to match this year's expenditures. Ms. Murphy also discussed, from lessons learned this year, additional resources will be needed for the next event. She further explained that there were a lot of donations this year and it cannot be guaranteed those donations will remain at the same level for the next event.
* ***Mr. Dougan motioned to accept with the proposed changes. Ms. Brodsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***
* ***Motion by Mr. McLaughlin to adjourn the meeting. No immediate Second. Ms. Sommer called for a Second. No Second. Motion Falls to Floor.***

C. Possible Dates for Accessibility Awareness Event.

* Ms. Brodsky offered up 3 possible dates for the event. 9/29/18, 10/27/18 and 11/3/18 - all Saturdays. Ms. Murphy suggested 11/3/18 as the other dates are busy times for people. Members agreed. Ms. Brodsky will look to see if the Community Center is available.
* Ms. Murphy stated that Thank You’s are needed for vendors and participants. Ms. Sommer and Ms. Brodsky agreed to work with Ms. Murphy to ensure appropriate Thank You’s are sent, people are granted appropriate community hours for their time and will work on language for Thank You notes.
* ***Mr. Dougan motioned that a sub-committee be established, consisting of Ms. Sommer, Ms. Murphy and Ms. Brodsky, to get the Thank You notes out, to ensure appropriate community service times are given and to report back at next meeting. Seconded by Ms. Brodsky. Motion passed unanimously.***

D. Correspondence Received.

* Ms. Sommer shared 2 documents received.
  + The first discussion was a notice from the Massachusetts Office on Disability regarding recently signed legislation regarding the increased penalties for misuse of Disability Placards.
  + The other correspondence was a letter from Jean Batty regarding a request of the COD to investigate the timing of, and use of, an accessible school bus in Scituate related to her son’s inability to have access to the use of said bus. The COD acknowledged the receipt of the letter. Ms. Sommer explained that the letter has been forwarded to the appropriate responsible parties, although they were already in receipt of the letter.
  + The specific request made to the COD by Ms. Batty has been answered by the parallel Public Records Request made by Ms. Batty to the School Committee.

E. Matters not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

* Mr. McLaughlin raised that he will continue to need to participate remotely, likely until March of 2018. Mr. Sommer acknowledged that request and will ensure the call-in option is available for those meetings.

**5. Adjournment**.

* ***Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Dougan and seconded by Ms. Brodsky. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.***

Next Meeting will be on Wednesday, January 10, 2018 at 7:30 pm at the Town Hall BOS Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey L. Dougan